



COMMANDER NAVY REGION HAWAII

SAFETY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2004

www.hawaii.navy.mil/Safety/index.htm



Occupational Health Corner

Every month the Safety Department puts out the Safety Newsletter. We, in the Regional Occupational Health section have been asked to contribute so we thought it might be nice if everyone had a better understanding of what Occupational Health is, who all the players are, and some of the processes that take place.

Occupational Health is the promotion and maintenance of the physical, mental, and social well-being of workers in all occupations by preventing or controlling negative health risks, and adapting work to people and people to their jobs.

From the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) to the individual worker, we all have a part in this program. Here in the Regional Occupational Health section we liaison between the Occupational Health staff at the Navy Medical Clinic to the Commanders, Managers, Supervisors, and of course, more importantly, the individual worker.

We utilize the Navy Occupational Safety and Health policy as well as other industry references to provide a more healthful and safe work environment to all Navy employees both active duty and civilian.

An example of this is as follows:

1. The Navy tentatively accepts the employee for employment.
2. An occupational health physical exam is provided by the medical staff which consists of the receptionist, Occupational Health Technician or Nurse, Audiologist, laboratory staff, and finally the Occupational Health Physician Assistant or Doctor who will summarize all the tests prior to giving medical clearance for employment.
3. The Bureau of Navy Medicine (BUMED) Industrial Hygienist(s), Regional Industrial Hygienist(s), Safety Specialist and the Safety Technician identify physical and chemical hazards in the workplace as well as consulting with occupational health doctors, nurses, commanders, managers,

supervisors, and workers on how to abate the hazards found in the workplace. We also provide specific occupational health related training for the workforce as well as manage Occupational Health Programs such as Asbestos, Lead, Respiratory Protection, and Hearing Conservation, to ensure we have a more healthful and safe work environment.

4. Once the employee passes his/her physical exam and is fully hired as a Navy employee it is his/her responsibility to follow through and keep up to date with physical exams as well as other guidance provided by the Occupational Health Team.

We are all players on the Navy's team, with one common goal in mind, to conduct our mission in a safe and healthful manner. We in the Regional Occupational Health Section will do our part to keep you fit to fight, so please follow through with your part too!



Hearing Loss Demographics

Here's some more interesting information from Bob MacPherson's bhNEWS list. He credits the Starkey website (www.starkey.com/1_identify/cultural_a.html) as the information source.

Hearing loss is more common than you might think. Interestingly, due to recreational and environmental noise, hearing loss is occurring at younger and younger ages. Consider the facts:

Demographics:

- ◆ 28 million Americans are hearing impaired, and an estimated 500 million experience hearing loss, worldwide. In the U.S., one out of 12 30-year-olds is already hearing-impaired and one in 8 50-year-olds suffer from hearing loss.
- ◆ After President Bill Clinton was fitted for hearing aids, more than 1 million other baby boomers identified themselves as experiencing hearing loss.
- ◆ There are more baby boomers aged 45-64 with a hearing loss (10 million) than there are people over the age of 65 with a hearing loss (9 million).

- ◆ More than a third of all hearing loss is attributed to noise: loud music, loud workplaces, loud recreational equipment.
- ◆ Thanks to the noise produced by a modern society, we're all losing our hearing at a younger age than we were 30 years ago.
- ◆ Of the 10 million Americans aged 45 to 64 who have a hearing loss, 6 out of 7 do not yet benefit from wearing hearing aids.

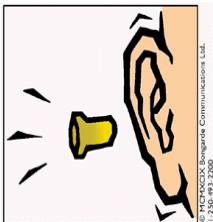
Hearing loss facts:

- ◆ Hearing loss is second only to arthritis as the most common complaint of older adults.
- ◆ Only about 10% of hearing losses are helped by surgery or other medical treatment.
- ◆ 90% of hearing losses can be treated with the use of hearing instruments.
- ◆ Only 16% of physicians routinely screen for hearing loss.
- ◆ Noise above 80-90 decibels on average over an 8-hour workday is considered hazardous.
- ◆ Firearms, music, airplanes, lawnmowers, power tools and many appliances are louder than 80 decibels and potentially hazardous to hearing with prolonged exposure.
- ◆ A live rock concert produces sounds from 110 to 120 decibels-easily high enough to cause permanent damage to hearing over a 2- to 3-hour period.

NOISE CENTER OF THE LEAGUE

PERSONAL STEREO SYSTEMS & HEARING FACT SHEET

Warning: Personal Stereo Systems May Be More Than Just Music To Your Ears
Personal stereo systems with headphones ("Walkman-type") have become an almost required accessory for today's teenagers.



Commuters, joggers, health club patrons, factory workers and office workers are also seen using these systems. Several studies have looked at the maximum output levels of personal stereo systems with headphones and have found that these levels pose a risk to the listener's hearing (Clark, 1991).

How Loud is Too Loud?

To know if a sound is loud enough to cause a damage to your ears, it is important to know both the level of intensity (measured in decibels, dBA) and the length of exposure to the sound. In general, the louder the sound, the less time required before hearing will be affected. Experts

agree that continued exposure to noise above 85



dBA (approximately the level of a city street), over time, will eventually harm your hearing.

Personal Stereo Systems: The Facts

Personal stereo systems with headphones produce sounds as loud as 105 - 120 dBA if turned up to maximum levels. Some studies concluded that in the majority of cases, unless the exposure time continued for several hours a day, over several years, the risk may be minimal (Findlay, 1974). More recent studies concluded that personal stereo systems present a hazard to hearing for a substantial portion of listeners (Catalano and Levin, 1985). In 1998, the League for the Hard of Hearing conducted a pilot study in conjunction with the City University of New York, and found the maximum output level of personal stereo systems to be 112 dBA. Although subjects interviewed set the systems at safe listening levels in quiet settings, they reported increasing the volume to hazardous levels while riding the subway, exercising or walking to and from work. Although guidelines in the workplace have been established to protect a worker's hearing, the same protection is not available for the use of personal stereo systems with headphones. The consumer must, therefore, take full responsibility for preserving hearing.

Steps to Protect Your Hearing While Listening to Personal Stereo Systems

To determine if you are at risk for a noise-induced hearing loss from wearing your personal stereo system, it would be necessary to know how loud your particular system is and how long you use it each day. Since systems vary in output, it is important to follow these simple steps to protect yourself from a permanent noise-induced hearing loss due to personal stereo system use:

- Look for a personal stereo system with an "Automatic Volume Limiter" which limits the output of the system to safe levels. Sony Walkman and Sony Sport both include an automatic volume limiter and limits the output at 85 dBA.

- Set your system at a comfortable level in a quiet room. Do not turn it up when you are in a noisy setting to "block out" the noise. This will only add to the noise and increase the risk to your hearing.
- Limit the amount of time you use the personal stereo system with headphones.
- Do not interchange headsets with systems. The League for the Hard of Hearing has found that this will increase output and risk to hearing.
- Follow this simple rule of thumb: If you cannot hear other people talking when you are wearing headphones or if other people have to shout to you to be heard at three feet away while the headphones are on, it is too loud and could be damaging to your hearing.
- If you notice any ringing in your ears, or that speech sounds are muffled after wearing a personal stereo system, discontinue its use and have your hearing checked by a qualified audiologist.

Be Safe!!

Friendly Training Reminders
(At Bldg. X-11 unless otherwise noted)

Lockout/Tagout Training
8 Jan - 0715-1100
Motorcycle (BRC) Training
8&9 Jan - 0700-1300
Indoc (PWC/PACDIV) Training
13 Jan - 0800-0930
Respirator Training
PWC Bldg. 40
15 Jan - 0730-0930
AAA Training
26 Jan - 0700-1500
Fall Protection Training
27 Jan - 0730-1100

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